

DESCRIPTION FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC (IN ENGLISH)

1. Aim of the research project and description of the studies:

This research project aims to investigate how interpreters process emotional content when interpreting in the English->Polish language pair. Our main goal is to test how positive and negative emotions expressed in the source language modulate the process of interpreting in the L1 (native language) – L2 (non-native language), and in the L2-L1 direction. Additionally, we will test whether interpreters' emotional responding correlates with interpreting quality, and whether the effect observed when emotionally-laden stimuli are delivered auditorily (Experiment 1) could be replicated in the audio-visual modality (Experiment 2). Previous research into bilingual emotional responding has pointed to a psychological distance when processing L2, reflecting a decreased sensitivity to emotionally-laden stimuli in L2 compared to L1. At the same time, studies conducted so far have shown an interpreting asymmetry, pointing to more cognitively taxing operations engaged in interpreting in the L1-L2 than L2-L1 direction (e.g., Hyönä et al. 1995; de Bot 2000). Based on the previously conducted experiments it is however unclear whether L2 psychological distance would be more robust in L1-L2 or L2-L1 interpreting direction. Furthermore, thus far studies on the impact of emotion on performance have been conducted on translators (Lehr 2013; Rojo & Ramos 2016), and not interpreters, and thus more research is needed to understand the interplay between emotion and interpreters' performance. Finally, the present project will include two Experiments that differ in the stimuli delivery (audio: Experiment 1; audio-visual: Experiment 2), and such a conceptual replication will improve the power of the two studies, thus providing even more valuable insights into the research questions that we are to address, and consequently significantly advancing the knowledge of emotional language interpreting.

2. Methodology employed in the research project:

In order to examine specific differences in how interpreters process positively-, negatively-valenced, and neutral stimuli when performing an interpretation task from L1-L2 and from L2-L1, the two experiments described in the present project will employ the skin conductance (SC) method together with a self-report measure (SUPIN S30, the Polish adaptation of the PANAS questionnaire, Positive and Negative Affect Schedule, Watson et al. 1988). The SC is a marker of emotional arousal, which indexes the activity of the autonomic nervous system and measures an electrodermal response based on skin conductance level (SCL) resulting from sweating. By employing this method, it will thus be possible to analyze the direct response of the autonomic nervous system when interpreting emotionally-valenced and neutral sentences in the two interpreting directions. SUPIN S30, on the other hand, measures self-reported emotional states based on an individual's personal experience. Additionally, we are going to measure interpreting quality by means of error analysis (Bartłomiejczyk 2010) and propositional analysis (Kurz & Färber 2003; Bartłomiejczyk 2010).

3. Expected results and significance of the project:

We expect to observe differences in psychophysiological (i.e., SC) and self-report (i.e., SUPIN S30) patterns that are modulated by 1). stimuli valence (neutral, positively-, and negatively-valenced stimuli), and 2). interpreting direction (L1-L2 vs. L2-L1). Additionally, we expect that interpreters' emotional responding modulates interpreting performance, which will be reflected in the correlation between SC/SUPIN S30 scores and interpreting quality. Using both audio- and audiovisual stimuli will show the role of extra-linguistic variables, including prosodic, intonational, facial, and gestural cues, in the process of emotional language interpreting.

Employing the SC method combined with a self-report measure to examine the role of valence and interpreting directionality in the process of interpretation is a novelty. Although interpreting has often been referred to as an emotionally taxing activity, research on emotional language processing in interpreting is still scarce. The research project is unique, as it investigates the process of language mediation while employing a psychophysiological method, which is likely to yield new, surprising results. The project will broaden our knowledge on psycho-emotional difficulties embedded in interpreting practice. It will contribute to filling the empirical gap by studying how valence of emotions and interpreting direction (L1-L2 vs. L2-L1 interpreting) mediate emotion processing in interpreting and will provide insights into how interpreters, whose role is to enable communication at the international level, process affect-laden content and how this may be reflected in interpreting quality.